EMILE COUÉ

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

By

HUGH MACNAGHTEN

Vice-Provost of Eton College

Tells what a skeptic who became a grateful patient saw and experienced at Dr. Coué's clinics at Nancy, describes the visit of Dr. Coué to England, and gives a graphic picture of the man himself.

10 -

C. M. Gayley.
from R. H. Hay Chapman Jr.

Oct. 1/23.

You will delight in the author's style even if you cannot subscribe to his enthusiasm —

EMILE COUÉ
THE MAN AND HIS WORK

BY
HUGH MACNAGHTEN
Vice Provost of Eton College
Sometime Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge

NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1922

COPYRIGHT, 1922,
BY DODD, MEAD & COMPANY, INC.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

TO
MY FRIEND
M. E. C.
AND HIS SISTER
AND MINE

FOREWORD

DEAR READER,

Look first upon this picture from Deuteronomy xxviii, 67: "In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning!" and then upon this, which I owe to Arthur Benson, from "The Pilgrim's Progress": "The Pilgrim they laid in a large upper chamber whose window opened towards the sunrising; the name of the chamber was Peace, where he slept till break of day, and then he awoke and sang." You may make either picture true for yourself; it is for you to choose.

H. M.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I WISH to thank the editor of "The Times" for his kindness in allowing me to use some part of a former appreciation of M. Coué, which he published for me on March 27th and 31st.

H. M.

Cher Mr. Macnaghten,

Je serai très heureux que vous écriviez le petit livre dont vous m'avez parlé et j'ajoute que je vous en suis reconnaissant.

E. Coué.

Londres, *le* 3 *Avril*, 1922

PRELUDE

"That is that which I seek for, even to be rid of this heavy burden, but to get it off myself I cannot, nor is there any man in our country that can take it off my shoulders; therefore am I going this way as I told you that I may be rid of my burden."—"The Pilgrim's Progress."

WHY I WENT TO NANCY

IT is always difficult to know how best to begin. No sooner had I written these words than I realized that I could hardly have made a more disastrous start; to talk of difficulty (ask M. Coué) is to court failure, but my blunder is so instructive an example of what we should avoid that I will let it stand. Clearly the easiest way to begin and the best will be to state as briefly as I can the succession of events that led me to Nancy, before I give some account of my experiences there, and then pass to M. Coué's latest visit to England.

A long series of accidents brought me to Nancy. I first heard of auto-suggestion in July, 1921, when somebody casually suggested to me that I should try M. Coué's method for the cure

of insomnia. His name was at the time unfamiliar to me; and I rejected the suggestion, without a moment's thought. Early in December a friend spoke to me of M. Coué and began to explain his method. He had only got as far as the famous formula, *Tous les jours à tous points de vue je vais de mieux en mieux,* when I interrupted with the obvious superficial criticism that I did not see how the repetition of a false statement, made twenty times, would help me, and dismissed the subject. Soon after this I went abroad, in search of sleep, in spite of Horace's warning that "when o'er the world we range, 'tis but our climate not our mind we change," which kept ringing in my ears. In fact I was continually making such harmful suggestions to myself, which were almost invariably confirmed by the event, for at that time I had no idea that to have such thoughts was simply to forge new chains which would make it more and more impossible to escape from the prison-house. In Italy I met a compassionate lady, to whom I confided my troubles, not knowing that to talk of them was almost inevitably to aggravate them. She lent me Baudouin's book, which I found difficult and not particularly helpful. To take only one instance, it irritated me to find that the law of reversed effort was frequently

alluded to, but never adequately explained. Consequently, though I managed to finish the book, it taught me little (all my fault, I confess) and gave me little encouragement. Then by a mere chance I was introduced to another lady, who, I was told, had been at Nancy and was eager to repay her debt to M. Coué by helping others to share the benefit which she had received from him. I soon proved this to be entirely true. Every day, of her great kindness, she devoted at least an hour to my instruction, and though she found me a most intractable patient she did at least succeed in inspiring me with the desire of seeking M. Coué himself. Indeed I actually looked out trains and should have made the not inconsiderable *détour,* which a visit to Nancy involved, had it not been for an accident which made a direct journey to England imperative. After my return I slept no better, and at last I yielded to the kindness of friends who made it easy for me to go to Nancy, and I went. Starting at 11 a.m. and travelling straight through from London, I reached Nancy at 6.40 a.m. next morning: it would have been possible but undesirable to arrive at 4 a.m. (The return journey may be made in a day, because the trains fit better; it is possible to leave Nancy at 9 a.m. and to reach Victoria at 10.40 p.m. the same day.)

On arriving at the hotel I was informed that M. Coué had returned the day before, and that he was to lecture at 9 a.m. in a distant quarter of the town.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Nancy	1
II	Nancy or London?	14
III	M. Coué at Eton	17
IV	M. Coué in London	23
V	The Sub-conscious Self	28
VI	On Some Stumbling Blocks	33
VII	M. Coué in His Relation to Christianity	39
VIII	On "Everything for Nothing"	46
IX	M. Coué	48

EMILE COUÉ

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

EMILE COUÉ

CHAPTER I

NANCY

"That which we have seen and heard."

THERE was just time for bath and breakfast; we were too excited to feel tired, and we were among the first to reach the little cottage consisting of one room on the ground floor and one upper room where M. Coué usually sees his patients, or (shall we not say?) his friends. The meetings are held in the upper room, which is quite small: if used as a dining-room, a table to hold six would be as much as there is room for. As a matter of fact quite twenty-four people are accommodated somehow, either on chairs and camp-stools or on the floor. In addition to the room itself there is a half passage half ante-room, which holds perhaps eight, and this also is usually full. Ventilation is a difficulty; a door must be open so that those in the ante-room may not be excluded; consequently, to avoid a draught, which people generally but

unwisely imagine to be dangerous, the window is relentlessly shut. M. Coué himself is, of course, thanks to self-mastery, almost indifferent to any atmosphere, stifling or otherwise. I suppose he says to himself, "I shan't mind this, I shan't mind this at all, indeed I shall rather like it," and his mind so readily falls in with the suggestion that he would emerge from the Black Hole of Calcutta itself quite unharmed. The rest of us try to follow in his steps, and some of us are actually surprised at our success in not minding very much the airlessness, and worse than airlessness, of the room; we have said to ourselves, "This is doing me good," or, if we shrink from such an overstatement of the case, at any rate, "This is doing me no harm"; if we boggle even at that, at least we can say of the discomfort, "It is passing," and before we have gabbled this many times it actually passes. "It is passing," as M. Coué reminds us, must be gabbled because it is essential that we should not allow the ambushed opposite thought, "It is not passing," to intrude itself and do the devil's work. By the by, M. Coué's native French is obviously in this instance preferable to English, for *ça passe* can be gabbled far more effectively than "It is passing."

And now perhaps the best way will be to give a few details of the different *conférences*

which I attended. A more strangely assorted company it would be hard to find. We seemed at first sight to be separated almost all of us by an immeasurable gulf from one another, yet it soon became obvious that every one wished well to his neighbour; we all of us seemed to be inspired by one spirit and that spirit was M. Coué's. I remember hearing an English officer in France say once, it was in January, 1919, "Every one helps every one else out here; one would never think of doing it in England." Well, it was just so in Nancy early in 1922: every one in M. Coué's presence took a genuine kindly interest in every one else. I was amazed by the goodness which I saw everywhere. It is comparatively easy to mourn with those who mourn; the difficulty is, especially if you are feeling no better yourself, to rejoice with those who are rejoicing in the gradual return of health; but in that room every one else managed it, and this all-embracing sympathy and universal good-will were, I believe, no unimportant factors in the improvement which took place day by day in almost every one. Doubtless in many cases what our friends chiefly need for the restoration of health and spirits is a little kindness; a sympathetic word is generally worth far more than any tonic. But as a rule when we fall ill and still have to go on with our work,

we become depressed and depressing; inevitably we are shunned, for undeniably we are very poor company; we are fortunate indeed if we possess any friends whom nothing will alienate, however sorely they are tried.

In describing my own experiences at Nancy, let me say at once that I witnessed no miraculous cures, but although this disappointed me at the time I now regard it as a positive advantage, because it would be so easy to be biassed and misled by a single exceptional case and consequently to miss, or at least to misinterpret, the whole meaning of M. Coué's work. Beyond doubt there have been not a few instantaneous cures which might be, and probably were, regarded as miracles by the majority of those present at the time, but M. Coué would never be one of this majority; he is never tired of affirming that he works no miracles, all he claims is that he is able in most cases to help us to cure ourselves. "I cannot help you," he would say, "if you have broken an arm or a leg; in that case you will go, if you are sensible, to a surgeon; but I may be able to help you to recover the use of a limb or an eye which from the mere fact of long disuse has ceased to act as a limb or an eye in being." It is true that at times he has seemed to achieve much more than this. A helpless cripple carried into the

room has left M. Coué's presence on his own feet, cured and triumphant; but the explanation is simple; the cripple had long ceased to believe in the possibility of walking and therefore the disbelief had translated itself into a real inability. The moment that he believed M. Coué, who had told him that he had the power of walking, that moment he was able to walk. As he first walked, shouting, "Je marche, je marche," and presently ran round the room, doubtless he seemed to himself a living and walking proof that miracles do happen; but to M. Coué he presented only one more example of the truth that, what you think, in the sphere of possibilities of course, tends irresistibly to become true for you. At the first *conférence* we were about a dozen English of the upper and upper-middle class and about the same number of French, of whom the majority were poor. As M. Coué goes his round and questions each of those present, one by one, there is plenty of evidence of human suffering in the long but unmonotonous tale of various ills from which the many patients are suffering. Yet almost invariably the pervading tone is one of hopefulness. The sceptic of yesterday is a little less sceptical today, in another's eyes despair is changing to a gleam of hope, my nearest neighbour slept better last night than on any night during the last ten

years; the woman next to him says, "I feel a little better, but——." Here M. Coué cuts her short, for "buts" spoil it all. Almost every one was better, and there were no miraculous cures. Some improvement, however, took place before our eyes: one old man, who at first could not raise his arm, ended, thanks to much encouragement, by raining blows on M. Coué's shoulder, though not, I must admit, as vigorously as M. Coué himself would have desired. Another man with rheumatism in both knees, after a little rubbing by M. Coué and many repetitions of the *ça passe* formula, found himself able to walk with comparative ease. Any such visible improvement was infectious and we all took courage. When M. Coué has made his round and has said some words to each of us, he tells us to close our eyes, and recites his gospel of health; we are just to listen without effort; a wise passiveness is best; indeed, we may sleep if we will, for our subconscious mind never sleeps and never forgets, and so his words sink in. We are to be very careful to eat slowly and turn our food into a kind of paste before we swallow it; thus certainly, but only thus, will constipation cease to be. We shall sleep soundly; our dreams, if we dream, will be pleasant; troubles and worries will melt away and we shall awake and sing; there will be no more

fears, no more thoughts of unkindness; shyness and self-consciousness will vanish. And how are we to win this great reward? Very easily it seems; without effort. As soon as we nestle on the pillow we are to close our eyes and recite without stress, but just audibly, the well-known formula some twenty times: "Every day in every respect I grow better and better"; or, if we think that those things are better said in French, "Tous les jours, à tous points de vue, je vais de mieux en mieux." It seems childish, does it not? It is really childlike, and that is a very different thing. And if we wish we can add the childlike words, "par la grâce de Dieu," or "Thank God," and so turn it into a prayer. Does this sound to you more like the Pharisee's prayer than the Publican's? To me it rather recalls the Samaritan who of the ten healed of leprosy alone returned to give thanks to God. Whenever in the course of his little sermon M. Coué mentions a disability or sickness, from which any one person in particular among his audience is suffering, he approaches that person and touches the part affected. One hardly realizes it as strange that he should remember as he does the ailments of some thirty persons, many of whom he is seeing for the first time. Only very rarely he makes a slip, as when, for instance, he touched a friend of mine on the

thumb that was not gouty, and said that very probably it would soon be like the other. Thank goodness! he is too intensely human never to make a mistake, and he will, I know, forgive me for hoping that in this particular forecast he was mistaken. He is himself as quick as lightning to take advantage of any mistakes that his patients make in describing their own condition, and his quiet humour is a constant source of delight. Nor are there wanting humorous episodes. For instance, hardly had M. Coué finished speaking of the certain cure of constipation when the sufferer he had been addressing hurried from the room, announcing, with mingled surprise and triumph, that the event was going to justify the prediction. These things are said more easily, without offence, in French; there was only a little ripple of sympathetic laughter while M. Coué smiled at the startlingly sudden fulfilment of his promise. Yet always M. Coué is careful to assure his audience "I cure no one"; all that he offers is his help in teaching others to cure themselves. On Friday there were two lectures in the afternoon, the first by M. Coué himself and the second by his friend and follower M. René de Brabois. Let me quote a single sentence which specially appealed to me from the second lecture. Our friend (we feel from the first moment that he

also is our friend) is speaking of sleeplessness. How is sleep to be recaptured? This is his answer: "Si vous faites un mouvement pour l'attraper, il vous échappera comme un oiseau," i. e., "Make ever so slight a movement to capture sleep and it will escape from you like a bird." It is fatal to call in your will, to make an effort, to determine to go to sleep. If you say "I *will* go to sleep," imagination will answer, "No, you won't"; and by a law which knows no varying the will yields to the imagination. You must say, "I am going to sleep," or better say it in French, "Je vais dormir," repeat it very quickly making the sound of a humming bee (*comme une abeille qui bourdonne*) over and over again, but above all make no effort to sleep.

The next day the *conférence* was at M. Coué's own house, which is not more than a hundred yards from the two-roomed cottage where we met the day before. There are sixteen of us in the study, but the door is left open and there are seven in the passage outside. First of all, as his custom is, he makes the round of the company, saying a few words to each. There is a girl present who stammers; he tells us how, in his own experience, on seven occasions the patient has been cured of stammering on the spot, though "this," he is careful to add, "is comparatively rare." Then he goes on, "Just the mere

sight of me! that sufficed to frighten away the stammer." M. Coué does not try to be funny, but he *is* funny. Everything of course sounds wittier in French, but there is real humour in such a question as: "Eh! bien, qu'est-ce qu'elle dit votre jambe aujourd'hui?" "What does your leg say today?" To return to the patient; she says "I cannot help stammering"; he says, think "I don't stammer any longer" and you will cease to stammer. Just for one moment I thought that "I came, I saw, I conquered" was to be realized, but it was not to be; there was an audible improvement, but the girl was not cured on the spot. There was also present another girl who, for twenty years, had been blind in one eye. The blindness was the result of a blow when she was only three years old; for a time the eye was really blind; when it recovered, its little mistress had learnt to do without it and therefore never thought of using it, though it was ready to be used. After twenty years, some six weeks before our visit to Nancy, she had come to M. Coué and had been taught to see. The eye which, through no fault of its own, had been idle for twenty years had not yet quite caught up its more active mate, but it was not far behind and has possibly made up the lost ground by now.

One other circumstance which may seem

trivial enough to others, particularly interested me at this *conférence*. All the time that M. Coué was talking a lady translated for the benefit of her neighbour who was ignorant of French. Under ordinary circumstances this would have been wildly irritating, but nobody seemed to mind in the least. Was it because M. Coué had inspired us all with the idea that we are meant to help one another whether at Nancy or elsewhere?

Certainly he tries to infect the despondent with the hopefulness of their neighbours, and not less certainly he contrives to inspire, at least to some extent, the feeling "each for all" among his audience. My own violent prejudices were beginning to disappear. I remember being intensely provoked when I read that at the end of M. Coué's little address the patient "opens his eyes and invariably smiles, with a look of satisfaction and comfort on his face," * and I vowed that at any rate there should be one exception to this rule. But the most foolish vows are sometimes broken, and very certainly I broke mine. I think, too, that if I had been told that M. Coué would smoke little cigarettes while he was talking I should have been prepared quite unreasonably (I hate smoking) to take offence;

* From M. Coué's admirable treatise "Self Mastery by Conscious Autosuggestion."

in fact, he did smoke a good deal and it made no earthly difference.

Some one remarked to me, "M. Coué likes us very much, considering that we are foreigners, but those whom he really loves are the poor." I do not think that he distinguishes between poor and rich in that way. Both will find him equally their friend. Socrates, I suppose, preferred the rich; the poor had the greater need of Christ, and for that reason, perhaps, may have had His preference. But then there was the rich young man whom He loved. Certainly M. Coué is no respecter of persons. Young and old, rich and poor are equally welcome. Sometimes rather battered specimens of elderly humanity present themselves, but M. Coué seemed hardly less hopeful of age than of youth, and no one was sent empty away. It is never too late to hope for amelioration even if complete cure is impossible. Old age is not a fatal disability: M. Coué makes no secret of his own sixty-five years, but hopes to work harder in the next ten years than even he has ever worked before. It is difficult for those who marvel at his untiring cheerfulness and wit, his boundless sympathy, and the triumphant repartees which sweep away the querulous objections of some who seem almost unwilling to be cured, it is difficult even for those who have often lectured

and preached themselves to realize how much it costs to give so lavishly to others. And M. Coué is daily spending himself on each of his audience, asking as his one and only reward that in their own cure they should give him such assistance as they can.

Very rarely is he disappointed of this most reasonable expectation. There was, however, one young woman who appeared to me intentionally unintelligent. After a while M. Coué reached, I think, the same conclusion and simply left her alone. One man was almost defiantly incredulous, but this man had fought well in the war and naturally that fact would cover a multitude of sins. In any case M. Coué seemed determined to help him in spite of himself, but whether he was successful or not I do not know.

CHAPTER II

NANCY OR LONDON?

"But above all the warm and joyful thoughts which they had about their own dwelling there with such company."—"The Pilgrim's Progress."

I HAVE tried to give the impression which I myself received from the *conférences* in 186 rue Ste-Jeanne d'Arc, and the little cottage in the lane which is just behind it. Naturally I shall be asked "Is it necessary to go to Nancy if M. Coué can be seen in London?" I answer "It all depends." You may be curable almost at sight or your sickness may be of long standing, deeply ingrained. I am sixty years old and Nancy was a necessity for me; even so it was touch and go. I had wonderful luck in the company of a sister and the presence of a friend, but I came away sleeping no better, perhaps actually worse than before: yet I did not come away without the sure and certain hope of recovery. But you will say, "M. Coué is the only one who really matters and he must always be the same." I do not agree; surroundings help, and friends help, and M. Coué is a power every-

where, but at Nancy most of all; inspiring as he is in 20 Grosvenor Gardens, he is far more inspiring in his study at 186 rue Ste-Jeanne d'Arc, and most inspiring of all in the little cottage some 50 yards away across the lane at the back of his own house. Is it not natural that this should be so? Consider. To go to Nancy at all involves some effort and some expense. Your object in going is to win a new peace or a new something; your doctor has very likely suggested that you require a change; vaguely you dream that you are going to have the glorious chance of a fresh start, and with everything new around you there is a greater probability that your dream will come true. Nancy itself is a pleasant town: very likely your hotel will be in the Place Stanislas, and in spite of some rather fidgety ornamentation the whole effect of the Square is charming. A good tram will take you in less than an hour to the junction of the Menthe and the Moselle; all these things help. Certainly, as I left the Place Stanislas and took my way past the market-place to the rue Ste-Jeanne d'Arc, distant about two kilometres, I felt a thrill which I can never imagine myself feeling if I had taken the train from Windsor to Paddington and the bus to 20 Grosvenor Gardens. Inevitably, too, M. Coué himself must feel more at home in the familiar surroundings and

it must be easier for him to talk French unconsciously than to check the flow of his thoughts and words every other minute while the last half-dozen sentences are being translated into English. Nor is the audience quite as helpful in England as in France. At Nancy there are very poor persons sitting next to great English ladies, and they all talk together as naturally and simply as if they were all friends. possibly it is a proof of culture in us that this strikes me as unusual; it ought of course to be the ordinary thing, but is it our English way? There, no, we have, if not all things at least one thread in common, who binds us each to each. This might equally be possible in London; but we do not think it possible, and therefore we act as if it is not true, * and with the old exclusions all around us those of us who have learned to appraise in sixpenny and almost to beg our chairs inevitably find it very difficult to leave the prison-house, even though the door be no longer barred.

* It is a measure of our English exclusiveness that a complete anticipation of M. Daudet's meaning which we owe to Mr. E. V. Lucas, Anne Thackeray Ritchie's father-in-law, should be unknown to us. "The rule is right when you add to it by imagination, whereas if you begin to measure yourself and to say 'It is nothing to explore only a mile, except it will seem so great', you will make it slight by thinking it so."

CHAPTER III

M. COUE AT ETON

(Reproduced from the "E.C.C." by kind permission of the Editors)

M. COUÉ reached England on Saturday, March 25, and gave his first lecture, at Eton, on the following day. The School Library was full, perhaps overfull, and yet hardly more than half the boys who applied for places could be admitted, in spite of the announcement that the lecture was to be in French and was to last nearly three times as long as Sunday Private. Some may have doubted whether even M. Coué would be able to hold his audience for so long; but any such doubts were quickly dispelled. A few simple and charming experiments based on the fact that it is impossible to think two things at once proved to us that e. g.—after clasping your hands you cannot separate them, however much you wish to do so, while thinking all the time "I cannot do it": you can do just what you think you can do. It follows that if you think you cannot speak without stammering you will continue to stammer, and if you expect

not to sleep your expectation will be fulfilled. Virgil meant much the same thing when he said of his rowers, who were rapidly gaining on their rivals, "they can because they think they can." How obvious it sounds, and how thrillingly interesting it was, as M. Coué drove his points home, proving that not the will but the imagination is the supreme force: always, however, the first step lies with the will, which before it abdicates must set the imagination working in the right direction. Probably some doubted, and possibly some mocked: certainly, as the ninety minutes all too quickly went by, the audience became more and more inspired by the lecturer, while beauty born of murmuring sound *ça-passed* into our faces! Pardon, mesdames, messieurs. Puns are a simple outrage, but seriously why is it that French esprit is so much more charming that English wit? For a single proof contrast the dull offensiveness of *to take French leave* with the light gaiety of *s'esquiver à l'anglaise.* To return to the lecture. There were no sensational cures: why should there be? Occasionally they just happen; but they are really a hindrance to an intelligent appreciation of M. Coué's teaching. Self-mastery based on recognition of the power of the imagination is the thing that matters. Quite unsensational is the truth which M. Coué

brought home to most of us, and it is this: there is no need of miracle, but much need of the simple common sense which is so sadly uncommon. If we eat slowly, if we never worry, if we look on the bright side of things, if our thoughts are sane and wholesome, if we use the childlike formula which he suggests, then indeed we shall be happy children, and every day in every respect we shall be growing better and better. We are just to go on from strength to strength, always rejoicing and never worrying about the morrow—perhaps we have read all this before in another book, but is it any the worse for that? Rather we may be thankful that M. Coué working on his own lines has reached very similar conclusions. There is no doubt that he has reached them independently. But, say some, "Life is meant to be difficult and M. Coué tries to make it easy. One *ought* to feel tired, and M. Coué says himself that he is never tired." Ought we to feel tired? Are you sure of that? Anyhow, what M. Coué says of himself is quite true. And why? Because M. Coué makes a point of going to sleep just when he is on the edge of being tired. "I wish *I* could," you say; "*I* often have to go on working long after I am tired out; and, anyhow, what about the labours of Hercules? wasn't he tired?" Listen. Last Sunday M. Coué reached Eton at

12. He lectured from 12.15 to 1.40. He then gave advice to a few who stayed behind to consult him for ten minutes. Lunch in Hall from 2 to 2.30. No, till 2.40, for (N. B.) M. Coué reduces his food to a pulp before swallowing it. From 2.45–3.30 he walks to visit a father who wishes to consult him about his little son. Then 3.30–4.15 follows a *conférence,* an address to some twenty people, most of whom are sufferers and wish for help. Then from 4.15 to 4.55 in another room M. Coué talks to and interests and delights some twenty people, mostly boys; 5–5.55 chapel. From 6 to 6.25 he is busy helping two boys who come to consult him, and sends them away full of hopefulness and happiness. From 6.30 to 7.5 he visits an Eton house, and talks to half a dozen boys. Remember, he is explaining a new and unfamiliar subject, and that requires concentration, does it not? Dinner from 7.15 to 7.45, and at 8 M. Coué is on his way back to London because a sufferer there has been promised his help, and he never fails any one. His host, who is very tired, though he has only been looking on and listening with delight, asks him, "But are *you* not tired?" "Comment, fatigué?" answers M. Coué; "je ne suis jamais fatigué." And the amazing thing is that this startling paradox is the simple truth. The

explanation is this. You can always think you are not tired, and, if you have complete self-mastery, always it becomes true for you. Always within the limits of what is humanly possible *bien entendu*. There may come a call, when on the edge of being tired you have just gone to sleep, and, if it come, you are bound to obey though you pass the boundary of very nearly being tired. Naturally there must be some limit to endurance, and you always avoid over-stepping it if you possibly can: always, unless duty calls you: then you will obey. No one can afford to laugh at a system which teaches such lessons and produces such results.

One word more. Now, as in the days of Thucydides, things quickly win their way to the fabulous. Two instances will suffice. A master here is reported in the papers as cured: what he actually said was that he had ceased to feel pain at the moment. Again, on Tuesday evening the papers reported the startling cure of a paralysed man: what he himself said was that he had on previous occasions been able, now and then, to do quite as much as he had just done in M. Coué's presence. "What truth was ever told the second day?" Even in the second minute the truth is often perverted beyond recognition. But after all we have not yet thanked M. Coué.

We do thank him very gratefully, but the gratitude which he will value most will be not the homage of our lips, but the daily growth in faith, hope, and that all-embracing charity of which he is himself the most illustrious example.

CHAPTER IV

M. COUÉ IN LONDON

"Among new men, strange faces, other minds."
—Tennyson.

IT was inevitable that I should wish to hear M. Coué in London, although, or, rather, perhaps, because I had so lately returned from Nancy. Would the *conférences* in Grosvenor Gardens produce anything like the same effect as those in the rue Ste-Jeanne d'Arc? That was what I wanted to discover. We left Eton early and walked across the park from Paddington (which is always a delightful thing to do), for we were determined to give London every possible chance. We arrived half an hour before the time fixed for the second *conférence,* but people were already gathering and it was quite interesting to stand and watch. At 11.30 the first *conférence* was over and there was considerable excitement as the inner room emptied; it was noised abroad that a paralysed man had walked. The next day we read in the papers that "The story of a paralysed man who had recovered power over his limbs was quoted excitedly in many parts of Wigmore Hall." Ac-

tually the patient said, not in the presence of M. Coué, but afterwards in the ante-room, "Sometimes I can do things and sometimes I can't. M. Coué did not help me to do more than I have sometimes done myself before." M. Coué of course did not hear this said, he had seen only the great advance which his patient had made in his presence. Consequently, there was a slight misunderstanding, no misinterpretation. For M. Coué always sticks to facts and is much more likely to depreciate than to exaggerate his own success. Before long all the ticket-holders had passed into the inner room and the second *conférence* had begun. There were about thirty of us (I did not actually count) in a room which was slightly larger and very much loftier than the little parlour at Nancy; something too of the same spirit, due to M. Coué's influence, prevailed; people spoke freely of their troubles and were genuinely anxious to help one another; in particular one lady who asked to be enabled to conquer her fits of crossness won the sympathy of us all. But something, inevitably I think, was lacking. It costs much more (not only in money) to go to Nancy, and the reward is greater in proportion to the greater cost. If you have been obeying wrong autosuggestions for nearly sixty years and bad habits have become ingrained, you had better go to Nancy

should it be possible. That will give you all the chances, and probably you will need them all. A young man or a young woman may very likely get the help they need from M. Coué, in a few minutes, anywhere. One such, an old Etonian, writes to me after a single short talk with M. Coué, "I cannot tell you how much better I feel and how much more cheerful. I slept so well last night that I was half an hour late for breakfast this morning: I hope soon to be able to return to work. No words can adequately express my gratitude."

I wished to attend one public meeting at Wigmore Hall, and the kindness of Miss Richardson enabled me to do so. I received her telegram just as I was sitting down to lunch; by missing it and running for a fly I reached Slough with two minutes to spare and Wigmore Hall just five minutes before the lecture began. It was in English and, though M. Coué speaks English far more distinctly than I speak French, he was not audible to one-third of those present, and their disappointment, though silent, could, in some mysterious way, be felt. Quite apart from this, French well spoken is a very lovable thing: inevitably there is a comparative absence of attractiveness in laboured English, for which even the lecturer's smile and unfailing charm could not wholly atone. All M. Coué's experi-

ments were brilliantly successful, yet the lecture itself just missed being a triumphant success and a few among the audience left before the close. But after the lecture it was most moving to see many men and women crowding to the stage in the hope of winning one personal word from M. Coué. My thoughts went back to the day when the sick were brought into the streets "that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." M. Coué, though shortly due at St. Dunstan's, did all that was possible to satisfy them. One nobly importunate nurse, regardless of herself and anxious only to win some medicinal word for the patient under her charge, had her reward, I am thankful to say, in seeing him cheered in soul and comforted. But at last the door had to be shut, and gradually the few who still lingered outside turned and went. Then we too left the hall and crossed the road to call on Mr. Ernest Depenham, who gave us tea and took us in his motor to St. Dunstan's; and on the way there I had a very pleasant surprise, for suddenly M. Coué said to me, "I feel as if I had known you for forty years." And I, for my part, could have answered truly, that I felt as if my own life had begun anew just seven weeks ago at 9 A. M., when I saw M. Coué for the first time in the little upper room at Nancy. I hope and

pray that to such a feeling *ça passe* does not apply. The room at St. Dunstan's held probably not half as many people as Wigmore Hall; it was a simpler place with noble and tender associations, and here for the first time I recovered the old feeling of "each for all" which I used to have at Nancy. I had to leave just before the end, but as I ran through the sleet to catch a taxi I felt that this last glimpse of M. Coué's work had been almost the best of all. It is no wonder that I had this feeling as I came from such a gathering. When Cromwell demanded (a) liberty to trade in the Indies, (b) and liberty of private worship the Spanish ambassador bluntly rejected both demands with the words "It is to ask my master's two eyes." And these men had made that very sacrifice.

CHAPTER V

THE SUB-CONSCIOUS SELF

A. "The outcropping of the Unconscious."—Baudouin.

B. "And none but he who watches them from birth,
The Genius, guardian of each child of earth,
Born when we're born, and dying when we die,
Now storm, now sunshine, knows the reason why."
Horace, Lib. 2 Epist. 2. 187-189. Conington's translation.

C. "The Little Minister."—J. M. Barrie.

SOME of my readers will think and say that my first quotation is nonsense. I know that is not the fact, but I entirely agree with them in thinking that such jargon is a hindrance rather than a help to ordinary men and women.

The second quotation is the standard passage (i.e., our main source of information) on that elusive and mysterious person whom the Romans called the Genius. What exactly do we learn from this passage about this Genius? First, he is always with us from birth and dies with us; secondly, he rules our life; thirdly, he is so important as to be called (in the original) the God of human nature; fourthly, he dies when we die; fifthly, he is liable to change his expres-

sion; lastly, sometimes he looks bright (literally white) and sometimes black. If all this is true, our Genius must surely be a very remarkable person and we ought to know something about him. What fun it would be if the Genius, of whom Horace was writing some years before Christ was born, should prove to be an alias of the very modern sub-conscious self. Let us look a little closer. What is it that we know about this sub-conscious self? Who is he, and what is his work? I am far from being an authority on the subject, but this is how it was explained to me, and it is at least a simple and intelligible explanation. Clearly we do not consciously direct the various processes on which our life depends: we do not look after our digestion or our breathing. If we take thought for either of these we shall make a sad mess of it, but, if we do not take thought for these things, who does? Very certainly some one is busy looking after them, and on the whole he does his work well, especially when we are young. If he does his work badly we suffer at once because then everything inside us begins to go wrong; hence come gout, constipation, insomnia, in short the whole miserable crowd of sicknesses. The obvious way is to consult the doctor, and it is often a very good way. Never forget that if you have broken anything it is the only way. The only way; but

you can help or hinder to any extent by looking on the bright or the dark side of things. Is it not delightfully simple? But some people dislike simple remedies as unworthy of their dignity and prefer a doctor's bill. Naaman, for instance, you will remember, was indignant at the thought of bathing in Jordan, not because it is a muddy, rocky torrent (that would have been reasonable enough), but because to bathe in Jordan after all the trouble he had taken seemed to him so ludicrous an anti-climax. Always then remember that there are some ills which you can cure for yourself without expense far better than any one else can cure them for you at vast expense; and never forget that even with the best London doctor at your bedside there is still a great deal that you can do to help yourself and him. Constipation, gout, insomnia you can cure without any help at all, if only in the first place you will be sensible and law-abiding (Nature's Laws are not to be broken with impunity), and if in the second place you can manage your unconscious self and enable him to do his work. (If this sounds rather like Alice in Wonderland, it is none the worse for that.) Now, luckily, this unconscious self is most anxious to please you; he is also very impressionable, and at every moment is influenced by you, so that if you say or even think, "I am ill," un-

fortunately for you, he always believes you, and then things all go wrong, just as, when you said or rather thought, "I am quite well," everything, thanks to him, went on quite well inside you. Never say then or think that everything is all wrong or that you are hopelessly tired, or anything dismal of any kind; if you do, your little servant, the sub-conscious, will overhear you and take your word for it, and hurry round to tell the nerves and veins, discouraged and discouraging, and then everything will go wrong indeed, and the worst of it will be that you will have thoroughly deserved your fate. Of course it is not really fate at all, but just your own fault, your own most grievous fault; and you are in fact the most miserable sinner, only you must never say or think so, for if you do you will discourage him all the more. And I say this not unmindful of our Church's Litany. We shall almost have won the battle as soon as we have realized that "the fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves," therefore think of Barrie and the stars. *Sursum corda et caudas,* i.e. "up with your hearts and your tails," but it sounds much funnier in Latin. The joke is not mine, worse luck; it belongs to a great historian who lives at Oxford. But I give it to you, and I must add just this, I cannot bring myself to talk of the outcropping of the sub-conscious (or un-

conscious) self; I do so love the little words. So let us borrow three little golden words which Barrie will never miss from his inexhaustible treasury and for the future talk, not of the subconscious self, but of "The Little Minister." You won't mind, dear Barrie, will you?

CHAPTER VI

ON SOME STUMBLING BLOCKS

"Every morning before rising and every evening as soon as you are in bed, you must shut your eyes, so as to concentrate your attention, and repeat twenty times consecutively, moving your lips (that is indispensable) and counting mechanically on a string with twenty knots in it, the following phrase, "Every day in every respect I am getting better and better."

UNDOUBTEDLY these words have proved a stumbling-block to many; we seem to have passed from the world of common sense into the fairyland of charms and incantations. But is it really so? Consider. I am going to be supremely bold and to speak for M. Coué. I have never asked him about this, so I alone am responsible for the explanation; but I have no doubt whatever that he would smile approval. I say then that it is not *indispensable* to repeat twenty times "Every day in every respect I am getting better and better," much less to move your lips or shut your eyes, if, without any of these external aids, you can put yourself into the right condition of mind just before you go to sleep. What *is* indispensable is that just before

you fall asleep your thoughts should be full of health and happiness, because in that case your unconscious self will continue to have such thoughts all the night long, and then at morning you will "awake and sing." And on waking it is indispensable that your first thoughts should be of health and happiness, because a good start is all important for a good day. If then you can achieve these results just by thinking, without the help of formulæ and moving lips and closed eyes, if in fact you are a very superior person, M. Coué will not grudge you your superiority. But the rest of us will find that M. Coué's is the easiest and safest way, especially as absence of effort is indispensable. We shall therefore, as good children, continue saying "Every day in every respect I am getting better and better," though we shall not fail to realize as sane men and women that it is the condition of mind and not the repetition of formulæ which is responsible for the daily improvement.

ON SOME PASSAGES IN ENGLISH POETRY

Can we derive any illustration of M. Coué's views from modern English poetry? Already in his delightful way "Mr. Punch" has pointed out that we may find it necessary to rewrite many

passages, and it is surely worth our while to consider the question seriously, because it will help us to discover whether we really understand M. Coué's view. First, then, let us take "The Grammarian's Funeral." It cannot, I think, be denied that the paradoxical truth of Browning's noble lines,

> "This high man aiming at a million
> Misses a unit,"

will, in M. Coué's view, cease to be true at all unless we are careful to make the necessary qualifications. It remains indeed true that we shall hardly fail to jump a foot or two, if we wish to do so, and it remains even more certainly true that we shall never jump to the rainbow's edge, however much we may desire it. But on the other hand should we aim at jumping twenty feet we shall have a better chance of achieving this than we shall have of jumping ten or five feet, or even a single foot, if we are absolutely convinced that we are incapable of such a modest achievement. For, if we really believe that we are unable to jump even the millionth part of an inch, our belief will translate itself into reality, and we shall remain rooted to the spot, unable to jump at all. So let us be the high man (if we believe Browning to be right in his preference for the high man) and aim at a million; for after all

(if we take M. Coué's word), provided the thing lies within the limits of what is humanly possible, we shall not miss it. Next let us take for our consideration Henley's glorious poem, "Invictus." You will remember that it begins—

> "Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit. . . ."

(Here let me say that I have no fear of your making the blunder which was once actually made by a boy in my division, who thought that "black as the pit" referred not to "the night," but to "me," and that the writer was a negro.) A little later come the fine words,

> "Under the bludgeonings of chance
> My head is bloody, but unbowed."

That is the spirit of the whole poem—it is a defiance of Fortune, a challenge flung in the teeth of Fate. And it ends with the words,

> "I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul,"

which none of us can read without a thrill. But what will be M. Coué's verdict on this poem? Clearly he will say of the last two lines that they are an epitome of his own teaching; but on the other hand it is not less clear that he will question the necessity for the "bloody head," and

affirm that the blackest night will, if we think that it will, break out into stars.

Let me give you one more example taken from the best-known poem of the best-known living poet, Mr. Rudyard Kipling. I have always loved and admired "If——." I have kept it framed in my room; but I have always regarded it as an impossibly high ideal, a mere counsel of perfection. And suddenly, only the other day, I realized that I had seen and spoken to and known the man whom Mr. Kipling foresaw. M. Coué, under just such circumstances as the poet describes, has kept his head; he has trusted himself when others laughed at him; he has waited for recognition till he was over sixty; he hasn't lied; he hasn't hated; he hasn't looked too good or talked too wise. I heard him say of himself, "I am not a very clever fellow," at St. Dunstan's, only a few days ago. He has talked with crowds in Wigmore Hall and elsewhere. Virtue has gone out of him, but he hasn't lost it (though that is not quite what the poet meant); he has dined at the houses of two ambassadors on two successive days, which is nearer than most of us ever get to walking with kings; very certainly he has not lost the common touch. (This last sentence sounds vulgar, and I *will* to erase it, but I think it apposite, and therefore keep it,

if only as one more proof that Imagination always triumps over Will.)

He still fills "the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run," and is never out of breath; assuredly "the earth and everything that's in it" belongs to the man who looks upon the whole world as his parish—and who else is this, in our days, but M. Coué? It all agrees exactly, except just these four lines which I have omitted and left to the end on purpose.

> "If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
> To serve your turn long after they are gone,
> And so hold on when there is nothing in you
> Except the Will which says to them 'Hold on!'"

You will realize at once, if you have understood this little book, why this could never be said of or by M. Coué. It is magnificent, certainly, to say it, but it is not the best or the surest way of winning the battle of life. Rather, if to the very end you can *keep* your heart and sinew, and the Will to think that there is *Everything* in you still, you will achieve at less cost greater results, and you will not be less heroic if (should there never come to you an imperative call to die for others) you live on, very happily, for others as well as for yourself, and, when the time comes at long last for dying, die in that happiness.

CHAPTER VII

M. COUÉ IN HIS RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY

"He that is not against us is for us."—St. Luke ix. 50.

SOME people regard M. Coué as the founder of a new religion. It is a mistake. M. Coué is the apostle of common sense; he is not introducing a new religion or any substitute for religion; he would say to us, "Be Protestants or Catholics, be Buddhists or Mohammedans, be what you will: it does not concern me whether you are zealots or Freethinkers: I only desire that all of you, from every point of view, Catholic, Nonconformist, or Agnostic, may grow daily better and better." In spite of this no one can know much of M. Coué without being conscious of some very obvious affinities between him and the Founder of Christianity. Both have a message for the sick; both labour for others, asking for no reward except the pleasure that comes from doing kindnesses; both give a new meaning and a new life to old phrases; both go wherever they are invited, making no distinctions; both enjoy the simple good things of life; both have a message; both believe that message

to be the truth; both are full of humour, full of compassion; and both arouse intense enthusiasm. Finally, Christ attributed comparatively slight importance to miracles, and M. Coué says expressly "there is no miracle at all." It is true that when a paralytic is cured on the spot, when he rushes to the window of the upper room in Nancy, when he shouts to the people who are gathering for the next *conférence* in the court-yard below, "Je marche, je marche," our thoughts go back nearly two thousand years to the beautiful gate of the Temple where a certain man, lame from his mother's womb, at Peter's word, leaping up, "stood and walked and entered with them into the Temple, walking and leaping and praising God." But the resemblance between the New Testament miracles and the work of M. Coué is superficial, the distinction fundamental. I do not know, though I think I know, what M. Coué would say about the passage I have just quoted: of the paralytic cured at Nancy every one knows that he has said it was no miracle; indeed for M. Coué, as for Matthew Arnold, miracles do not exist. The cures which are so astonishing as to seem miraculous are everyday occurrences. The miracles of Christ as reported in the Gospels, whether we accept or reject them, stand on an entirely different footing, and cannot be explained away in the sense in which this

particular miracle of Acts iii might be explained away, and in which M. Coué is himself the first to explain away his own miracles. If we accept as truth the evidence of the Gospels, so much the better for us; if we cannot accept it as truth, we can at worst illustrate by the growth of misrepresentation in those days the exaggerations or distortions which are now daily giving us fables in place of facts, in spite of M. Coué's own devotion to the truth. This process of distortion is not of today or yesterday. Look for a moment at the chapter in the Acts which precedes the miracle which we have been discussing. You will find a flagrant instance of distortion there: read Chapter II, verses 1–13, as they are always read in church, without a word of comment, as a record of historical fact; what nonsense it is! The gift of tongues apparently conferred on the Apostles the power of speaking in some dozen languages of which they were hitherto completely ignorant. This is indeed a miracle for miracle's sake, a thing to make men and women gape with admiration. And all for nothing. The Apostles, of course, needed only one language, for the knowledge of Greek would take them everywhere; the other eleven languages they might forget at their leisure and be none the worse, if only they kept their Greek. Besides, St. Paul who knew the facts tells us all

about the gift of tongues, which, by the by, he rather depreciates. No wonder, since to speak with tongues was to use a cento of shreds and patches of speech with so little distinction in the sounds that the performance, as St. Paul tells the Corinthians, was likely to strike the ordinary man as destitute of decency and order. "Will they not say that you are mad?" Of course they will; in fact they did, mad or mad-drunk, for "These are not drunken," St. Peter remonstrates, *"as you suppose."* The explanation given in Acts is ludicrous. Bracket, or, better, erase five and a half verses from "because that every man heard them speak in his own language" in the middle of verse 6 down to the end of verse 11, and then you have a perfectly reasonable story which agrees with St. Paul's account and we are quit of a wild and wanton miracle. Yet these same five and a half verses are actually read in every church as gospel (or rather epistle) truth without any apology (defence is out of the question), without even a word of explanation, although every thinking man and woman in the congregation must know the interpolation to be nonsense, for of course the offending verses must have been interpolated. If St. Luke wrote them, when he might for asking have had the true account from St. Paul, he was a careless third-rate author,

whereas in fact he belongs to the little company of great historians. Further, if this is not an interpolation, it follows that the early chapters of Acts, before the author became an eye-witness, are not merely comparatively, but almost absolutely, valueless as evidence. Incidentally what are we to say of the annual infliction of this absurdity on yearly dwindling congregations? Surely it is the assumption that the church-going public will stand anything, which explains, in part, why it is that year by year the congregations dwindle. But will my readers stand this long digression? Perhaps they may, if it helps them to see how easily the truth about M. Coué may be distorted. When once they have realized this they will not lightly be mislead into believing that miracles have not had their day; rather they will sift every story and, if themselves present, they will wisely discount the almost inevitable enthusiasm which leads the sufferer, who is being temporarily relieved, to think, and perhaps to say, that he has been miraculously cured.

Have we any right to ask what view M. Coué himself takes of the miracles of Christ? We may, I think, without offence conjecture that he would say, "I am so busy with the work which I believe I was sent into the world to do that I really have no time to study the evidence

for and against Christ's miracles." (This, by the by, would be not unlike the answer which Socrates made, when Phaedrus asked him, "Do you believe these tales?" "I might give," he answered, "a rationalizing explanation, but such an explanation would require much labour and much ingenuity, and I have really no time for such enquiries.") And some future day some disciple of M. Coué, less wise, less busy, and rasher far, may rush in and answer that the miracles of Christ are no miracles: they can all be explained away quite naturally. Blind men were cured, just as a girl blind of one eye was cured at Nancy; lame men walked, just as the paralysed man at Nancy walked; the miracles of feeding can be explained quite as easily in a slightly different way. Christ said to the multitude, "Imagine you are not hungry, imagine you have just had supper." They used their imagination at his word and felt that he had fed them. And so on.* The raising of Lazarus is to be explained as Renan explained it. And so on. And what shall we answer? "Best be still," as Matthew Arnold counsels; or, if our

* Similarly Arrian tells us that when a little water was found in the desert and brought to Alexander for himself alone his magnanimity in refusing to drink it and pouring it on the ground so inspirited his army that "it seemed as if each soldier had drunk the water which Alexander had spilt."

silence is liable to be misinterpreted, may we not answer this? The miracles have little importance; Christ Himself set small store upon them in comparison with His words. The things that matter are the Sermon on the Mount, the parable of the Prodigal Son, the story of the woman taken in adultery. The man born blind, though his eyes were opened by a miracle, did not believe in the Son of God till Jesus talked with him. Then he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped Him. If you ask *me* whether I believe in Christ's miracles, I might answer that I do not know. I prefer to say that "nothing is impossible with God," and to add that "I will take Christ's word, if I can be certain that it is Christ's word, for anything."

CHAPTER VIII

ON "EVERYTHING FOR NOTHING"

"Here had been, mark, the general in chief,
Thro' a whole campaign of the world's life and death,
Doing the King's work all the dim day long."
How it strikes a contemporary.—Browning.

THERE can be no doubt as to what is meant by the words "for nothing." M. Coué spends himself freely on others, and asks nothing in return. But what is meant by "everything"? Once again, and for the last time, everything means all that is humanly possible. But many things which seemed yesterday impossible are known to be possible today, and there may be even wider possibilities tomorrow. So we are justified in hoping for almost anything in the way of cure. Nothing is too good to be true, but miracles do not happen. It would, as far as we know, be a miracle, if new teeth were to grow, in middle age, to replace the old. It would not be a miracle if your hair were to grow thicker instead of thinner, thanks to auto-suggestion. Certainly it is much more likely

to happen, if you believe it will happen, than if you use the latest hair-restorer.

All diseases which are due to the imagination, such as neurasthenia, are curable. Paralysis of one kind is also curable, i. e., when the sufferer thinks he has no power to use his limbs, and only for that reason cannot use them. Constipation is easily cured, and so in most cases is sleeplessness; gout, arthritis, and neuritis can be cured if they have not become inveterate. But, above all, such crushing disabilities as stammering, shyness, and self-consciousness vanish in a moment as soon as the principle of autosuggestion is once realized. Many boys and girls, and many men and women, have suffered agony outside the drawing-room door; at last in sudden desperation they have turned the handle, to burst in looking and feeling awkward and unhappy. Alas! it is all too likely that the same sad scene will be again enacted in their dreams. And the pity of it is that all this suffering is so easily avoidable. Just say to yourself, "I shan't be shy; why should I be shy? Of course I shan't be shy; I shall like talking and making myself useful." Then indeed you will not fail to like it, and very certainly you will be liked. For it *is* in mortals to command success, and (best of all) to help, as M. Coué day by day is helping, others also to succeed.

CHAPTER IX

M. COUE

MOST people come to realize sooner or later that the only reward worth winning is the love of others, and lament that they have made the discovery too late. Perhaps only women have ever realized that to be loved is comparatively unimportant and that to love others is the only perfect happiness. Only women? There is at least one exception to every rule, and M. Coué seems to have divined from the first that loving is its own reward. Rich and poor, bad and good, to him they are all men and women, and if they need his help he gives it to them, without distinction, in his all-embracing charity. This is the true source of his infectious happiness. Consequently riches are to him simply negligible as a factor in well-being; and doubtless "it is more blessed to give than to receive" has never seemed to him a startling paradox. Praise is to most of us the best of tonics. I will not say that praise leaves him cold, because he is never cold, but I will say

that even the world-wide tribute of praise, which he has lately won, has been utterly powerless to affect his inalienable simplicity. Doubtless some of this praise has been injudicious; probably I am an illustration of this myself. M. Coué has reason to ask to be delivered from the exaggerations and misinterpretations of some of his friends. And, just as Wilkes was never a Wilkite, so it is equally true that M. Coué is not a Couéite. Possibly all that M. Coué has taught us may have been taught (though I do not myself believe it) by others before, certainly "They can because they think they can" is as old as Virgil. But, though the truth may have hovered on the minds and lips of men before, it is M. Coué who has first revealed it simply and convincingly; and it is a revelation which has helped many and will help many more to an almost unbelievable degree. Some people resent the abdication of the will. "Oh, well for him whose will is strong" sounds so manly and magnificent. But as a matter of fact the will does not abdicate until the imagination has in obedience to the will been started in the right direction. If the imagination can do the rest, what sense is there in the will interfering any more? Point the rifle and pull the trigger of course, but surely it will be unwise to try and guide the bullet with your hand! And even if

things are made easy for us, why complain? There will always be difficulties enough. We need not rewrite the old Greek proverb, "The lovely things are difficult," even if the rough places become a little smoother for Love and Life to climb; rather as we win higher heights with lighter hearts we shall feel that we owe to M. Coué the wider view, and, if we fail to reach the summit, it will be Mount Everest and no meaner height which we shall have failed to climb.

Wishing may be idle, but at worst it does no harm, so let me end with a wish, or rather, since wishing costs nothing, with two wishes: I wish, then, that if M. Coué comes back to England in the autumn it may be my good fortune to go with him to Westminster Abbey and to show him the words on John Wesley's memorial tablet, "I look upon the whole world as my parish." And now comes the real wish. It is that M. Coué may think, as he reads the words, which have been with good reason applied to himself, only of John Wesley: that will be the crowning proof of unselfconsciousness; and I have good hope that my wish may be realized, for of M. Coué nothing is too unselfconscious to be true. And, incidentally, I hope that after that we may lunch together at the Deanery with my old Eton fag master and his wife. And my second wish is

that on another day we may go to London's great Cathedral with another old Etonian Dean for our guide and friend, who will point to the words, "Si monumentum quæris circumspice" ("If you ask for his memorial look around you") as we stand together under the noble dome which bears witness to the justice of that epitaph. Noble indeed is the memorial that Wren has left behind him, but there is another kind of memorial nobler still, a memorial wrought not in stone or brass but in the hearts of living men and women; and such is the monument which M. Coué is daily building for himself. And now, since all good things are three, as I learnt long ago from a beloved German lady, and since love and not hatred is the final goal, let me end with three words taken from the book which I believe M. Coué read for the first time a year ago, but which all his life long he has been illustrating, just these three words: "The Beloved Physician." Certainly there is one and doubtless there are many who, whenever they hear these words read, will think of him.

ENVOI

DEAR READER,

You and I have both set out on the same Pilgrim's Progress. I myself have always been Mr. Dispondency; I wonder if you have ever

been Mr. Timorous or Miss Much-afraid! If you have, do listen with me to Mr. Great-Heart and Valiant-for-Truth talking together; it is lovely to hear them, because it is not only talk; they are really just like that in themselves.

Great-Heart: "And did none of these things discourage you?"

Valiant-for-Truth: "No, they seemed but as so many nothings to me."

Great-Heart: "How came that about?"

Valiant-for-Truth: "Why, I still believed what Mr. Tell-True had said, and that carried me beyond all."

—"The Pilgrim's Progress," Part II.

You can find almost everything in "The Pilgrim's Progress," as the writer of that wise and brave book, "Ordeal by Battle," taught us seven years ago. And now I must tell you a secret. Mr. Tell-True's name today is M. Emile Coué. What? You had guessed that before I told you? At any rate you had not guessed what I am going to tell you now, and mind you engrave it on your hearts. Mr. Great-Heart was once called Mr. Timorous and Miss Much-afraid is now not unworthy of the man she is to marry, who is Mr. Valiant-for-Truth.

I have only had seven weeks in which to find a new name for Mr. Dispondency; I hope I have found one, but I cannot yet be sure. Very cer-

tainly I can say it is my prayer that "my Disponds and slavish Fears be by no man ever received," from this day for ever. And so goodbye.

THE END

1/23 X